

specialize in every way possible, with the object of collating information for circulation amongst the people. A special library dealing with consumption will be established in Wellington and another in Cambridge, and I intend to issue bulletins, which will be circulated throughout New Zealand, giving information from all parts of the world as to what can be done to prevent and remove tubercular and pulmonic disease of every kind from men, women, and children. With regard to subclause (c), which reads, "That receiving homes be placed in the large centres for the reception of mental incipient cases, cost and maintenance of same to be borne by the mental authorities, &c.," that proposal has my most hearty support, and it is one which I have laid before the Hospital Board at Auckland and at other places. You will agree with me that whenever a man or woman is suffering from mental aberration which may be only temporary we ought to have something better than to throw them into a mental hospital, or, as we used to call it in the old days, a "lunatic asylum." Surely our civilization ought to have reached a higher point than to put men and woman who may only be temporarily deranged in an institution calculated, as soon as they discover they are there, to produce chronic and permanent insanity. While I have control of the Department dealing with mental hospitals it will be my one aim to see that these rest homes may be established, where people can go without the slightest suggestion or taint of being in an insane institution, and be afforded every opportunity of recovery before their cases become so bad that they have to be sent to a mental asylum. Then, as to the latter part of subclause (c)—viz., "also, that the treatment of habitual inebriates should be a charge on the same Department"—that is, charged to the mental hospital vote—I cannot agree to that. I think that the treatment of persons who are habitual inebriates should not be a charge upon the funds of the State directly. Are these cases meant to be delirium tremens cases?

A delegate: No.

The PRESIDENT.—Well, so far as the treatment of habitual inebriates is concerned, that is now entirely paid for at the two islands Rotoroa and Pakatoa—the State pays the whole cost, less the amount recovered from the patients or their relatives. I agree with that, and I think, if necessary, the institutions that will control these people—that will take off our streets these habitual inebriates—should have their powers extended; and I hope the time is not far distant when the scenes we unfortunately witness of homes broken up, of men degraded and women disgraced by excessive drinking, will be removed from our country by a higher degree of civilization being brought about. The last resolution is, "That the Destitute Persons Act be amended." No indication has been given as to the direction in which it should be amended. I hope the chairman will amplify that resolution.

Mr. J. H. WALKER.—I have moved clause 1 only.

Clause 1—"That this Committee recommends to the Conference that Part IX be deleted from the Bill, the present Act, with some minor amendments, being satisfactory"—agreed to.

Clause 2—"That it be a recommendation to the Department to give the following matters its serious consideration—(a.) The alterations of boundaries, either by enlargement or otherwise. (b.) To place upon the estimates a sufficient sum annually to cope with consumption. (c.) That receiving homes be placed in the large centres for the reception of mental incipient cases, cost and maintenance of same to be borne by the mental authorities; also, that the treatment of habitual inebriates should be a charge on the same Department. (d.) That the Destitute Persons Act should be amended."

Mr. J. H. WALKER (Chairman of Committee No. 4) moved the adoption of this clause (clause 2). He was glad the Minister had had an opportunity of expressing his opinion in connection with this clause. He would like to say, with regard to paragraph (a), that this was purely a matter they had taken from the Inspector-General, and it fully explained itself. He was glad indeed the Minister was going to give the question of consumption the earnest attention it required. It had been recognized by all members of Boards throughout the Dominion that this was getting to be a very excessive charge on the Hospital Boards. It was also recognized that to cope effectually with consumption it was necessary that a sum of money should be placed on the estimates out of the Consolidated Fund for this purpose. In Otago—the district he represented—the need was proving itself very great. They had something like thirty-five cases in the Pleasant Valley institution, and the numbers coming in averaged about one a fortnight. It was therefore necessary, if they were to successfully cope with consumption, to do as was done in Great Britain: the Government of the day should place on the estimates a sufficient sum for the purpose. They were very glad to assist the Inspector-General, but it had been recognized—and the Minister had no doubt heard it from the Hospital and Charitable Aid representatives—that it operated very harshly in the country districts that so large an amount of their rates should be taken to pay this tax; and to place more on them at the present day would certainly be very hard. When they were distributing the pamphlets connected with this subject—which was a very good thing to do—he would go a little further, and ask the Government of the day to place on the estimates a sufficient sum of money to help the Hospital Boards to cope with this trouble. This had been unanimously affirmed at a conference held three years ago, but the Government since then had taken no steps in the matter. Certainly the Inspector-General had promised to take into consideration the question of giving a larger subsidy than 24s. in the pound, but so far no effect had been given to that proposal. As to the question of receiving homes, the Hospital Boards of the Dominion were quite willing to take in incipient mental cases, but they recognized that the charge should also be one on the mental institution. Every Hospital Board recognized the trouble in connection with this matter, and Dr. Valentine, he understood, was of opinion that they should be given a certain sum to provide a ward in the larger hospitals for mental incipients. He himself thought that no Hospital Board should be charged for the maintenance of these incipient cases, and he might remark that it had cost them as much as £11 a week in the Dunedin Hospital to treat these cases. It must be realized that it was the duty of the municipal authorities themselves to provide receiving wards, and to pay the cost of the upkeep. The suggested amendment of the Destitute Persons Act